

**REMARKS**

Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 2, which the Examiner rejected as being obvious over Steiger in view of Vanga. Claim 1 is directed to a mobile device having an acoustic port formed in the housing. The port is an opening that projects audible sound rendered by an internal speaker, and includes a support bar. Note that the support bar of claim 1 is disposed in the opening, and spans the opening, and is configured to receive an external strap that attaches to the mobile device. Thus, the claimed acoustic port performs a dual function. It projects audible sound rendered by the internal speaker, and it serves as a connection point for a strap (e.g., a lanyard) that the user connects to the device.

Neither Steiger nor Vanga are relevant to the claimed invention. Steiger discloses a guitar having a sound hole 12 that projects sound, and a string holder 17 that secures guitar strings over the sound hole (see Figure 1). Vanga discloses a string holder for a guitar. Guitars are not mobile devices as the specification, figures, and claims describe that term. Moreover, those skilled in the art commonly understand that a mobile device is a portable electronic device such as a cellular telephone or a portable audio player. No one skilled in the art would ever believe that a guitar is a mobile device.

Moreover, neither reference teaches or suggests what the Examiner says it does. Steiger does not teach or suggest a support bar disposed in an opening of an acoustic port. The Examiner admits this fact, but asserts that Vanga does. Vanga, however, teaches a string holder that clips to either side of a sound hole in a guitar. The string holder cannot possibly be disposed in the opening as claimed. The string holder of Vanga must remain outside of the opening because the strings must remain outside the opening. If the Vanga string holder were in the opening, the strings would be in the housing and the guitar would be useless to the user.

In addition, neither reference teaches or suggests that their respective string holders are configured to receive an external strap that attaches to the mobile device. Contrastingly, both hold guitar strings – which are not external straps by any interpretation of that term. The external strap of the claimed invention may be placed around a user's wrist to permit the user to carry the mobile device. No one carries a guitar by its strings, and they certainly do not place guitar strings around their wrist. No one skilled in the art would ever believe that a guitar string – held taught over a sound hole – is the same thing as an external strap. Thus, neither string holder is configured to receive an external strap as claimed.

The rejections evidence an unduly broad and unreasonable interpretation of the references. They do not teach or suggest what the Examiner says they do, nor are the references relevant. Neither reference teaches or suggests claim 1, or any of its dependent claims, alone or in combination. Therefore, the §103 rejections must be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejected independent claims 13, 16, and 25 as being obvious over Steiger in view of Vanga for substantially similar reasons. However, claims 13 and 25 – which have not been amended – contain language similar to that of claim 1. In addition, claim 16 has been amended to include language similar to claim 1. Therefore, neither reference teaches or suggests, alone or in combination, any of claims 13, 16, and 25 or any of their respective dependent claims.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1 and 16 as being obvious over Altilio in view of Naruki. However, neither reference alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the claimed support bar (i.e., the subject matter of now-cancelled claim 2) nor does the Examiner allege that they do. Accordingly, the amendments render §103 rejections of claims 1 and 16 moot.

Finally, claims 3 and 4 have been amended to ensure correct dependencies, and claim 15 has been amended to address the informality noted by the Examiner. No new matter has been added.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all pending claims are patentably distinct over the art cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination.

Respectfully submitted,  
COATS & BENNETT, F.L.L.C.

Dated: November 21, 2007



Stephen A. Herrera  
Registration No.: 47,642

1400 Crescent Green, Suite 300  
Cary, NC 27518

Telephone: (919) 854-1844  
Facsimile: (919) 854-2084